

EDGEFIELD COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes January 3, 2006

The regular meeting of the Edgefield County Council was held at 6:00 P. M. Tuesday, January 3, 2006, in the County Council Chambers located at 225 Jeter Street, Edgefield.

Members present:

C. Monroe Kneece, Chairman
Willie C. Bright, Vice Chairman
Norman Dorn, Councilman
Joel D. Hudson, Councilman
B. Everette Kitchens, Councilman

Others present:

Wayne Adams, County Administrator
John F. Byrd, Jr., County Attorney
Barbara R. Stark, Clerk to Council

The council meeting was called to order by Chairman Kneece and Rev. Lloyd gave the invocation. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited after the invocation was given.

Election of Chairman and Vice Chairman

County Attorney John Byrd conducted the election of the Chairman and the Vice Chairman by secret ballot. Unanimous votes were received to re-elect Monroe Kneece as Chairman and Willie Bright as Vice Chairman.

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The December 6, 2005, Minutes of the regular meeting of the Edgefield County Council were approved by a motion made by Councilman Bright, seconded by Councilman Kitchens. The motion carried unanimously.

Reports

Councilman Hudson stated that after reviewing Report Number 4 (Planning Commission attendance report for 2004 and 2005), he would like to make a motion to replace the District Five representative on the Planning Commission, and he would have the name of the replacement at the next council meeting. The motion was seconded by Councilman Kitchens. Motion carried unanimously.

Report Number 5 was the introduction of new county employees, and they were welcomed by council:

Danny Timmerman, Building Inspector
Calvin Settles, Field Appraiser
Lynn Strom, Budget & Finance Manager

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The administrator introduced Mr. Timmerman and Mrs. Strom. Mr. Settles was unable to attend the council meeting.

PUBLIC HEARING

At this time a public hearing was held to receive public comments (written and/or oral) on the following ordinance:

Ordinance No. 05-06-576, "An Ordinance to Direct That the Implementation of Real Property Reassessment in Edgefield County Be Delayed for One Year, As Authorized By §12-43-217 (B), South Carolina Code of Laws 1976, as Amended."

Councilman Dorn asked what would happen with the assessed value as to whether or not the state passes a different reassessment value. Do we go back to the 2005 figure or whatever date?

Mr. Adams informed council that the values will be same for the upcoming tax bills as the previous tax year. They will not change. The implementation of the new values would be delayed by one year. Property owners would be notified in February 2007 rather than February 2006 of the new values, along with the right to appeal those values.

Ordinances

Third reading of Ordinance No. 05-06-574,"An Ordinance Amending §35.16 of the Edgefield County Code of Ordinances to Provide for the Composition, Terms, and Procedures of the County Board of Assessment Appeals", was approved by a motion made by Councilman Kitchens, seconded by Councilman Hudson. The motion carried unanimously.

The second reading of Ordinance No. 05-06-576, "An Ordinance to Direct that the Implementation of Real Property Reassessment in Edgefield County be Delayed for One Year, as Authorized by §12-43-217 (B), South Carolina Code of Laws 1976, as Amended" was approved by a motion made by Councilman Hudson, seconded by Councilman Kitchens. The motion carried unanimously.

Resolutions

Councilman Bright made a motion to approve Resolution No. 05-06-288, "A Resolution Honoring the 2005 Strom Thurmond High School Rebels Football Team for Their Class AAA State Championship Season." Councilman Bright's motion was seconded by Councilman Kitchens and the motion carried unanimously.

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New Business

Auction

Mr. Norman Stephenson addressed council concerning the recent auction of Edgefield County surplus vehicles and equipment. Mr. Stephenson stated that council did not consider the taxpayers of Edgefield County when the decision was made to turn the sale of the vehicles and equipment over to an auction company in another state. He felt a local auction should have been held.

The administrator asked to address council. One of the things was that our ad may not have been large enough. Maybe it was not large enough that individuals could read and probably should have listed everything that was to be auctioned. He said that he could not blame council for that for the fact that people who wanted to bid did not know what was out there to be bid on. As far as keeping people out, any method you have will exclude some people. There are some people who cannot make a fixed time and date for an auction. People such as business owners, for instance, will find it very convenient that they can put in a bid price for any item any day in a thirty day span and they do not have to be anywhere in particular to do that.

The way this auction was handled did bring in bidders from all over the country. There was more competition than could have been encountered by holding a local auction from advertising in local papers.

Chamber of Commerce Map

Mr. John Allen, Project Manager for Village Profile, the Mapping Company contracted through the Edgefield County Chamber of Commerce, brought before council the plan for the publication of a new map of the entire county, to be distributed by the chamber. The process was started earlier this year with a two to three year time frame. Mr. Allen stated that he had spoken with the administrator in regards to placing an ad by the county on the map. The chamber will work out an arrangement with the county to insure that the county will receive additional maps to sell and compensate for the actual cost of the ad.

Mr. Adams stated he understands this is a fund raiser for the Chamber of Commerce and these sponsorships help them to put the maps out for circulation and for sale. That is how the chamber makes their money. Also, it is understood that Mr. Allen will be addressing this request with the towns and businesses.

The ads generally start out at \$395 and up. All of the different prices include the layout and design services. It also includes a web site link to the county web site. Chamber of Commerce will have a web site link directly to the publications so any newcomer moving into the area that is looking to get additional information on Edgefield County can do so by either contacting the chamber directly or by looking on the web site. They will be able

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to pull the entire map up on line and look at it in detail and zero directly into each advertiser who will also receive a spot on the map as well. We actually will locate every business with a special locator dot so there will be a printed version as well as an on-line version. Then there will be a version available if you have a PDA (Palm Pilot). That can be downloaded. This will be made available sixty (60) days from the delivery of the publication. Most of the ads being sold are of business card size, but there are other sizes, depending on the size you would like.

Every advertiser will receive a number of maps with the ad based on what size ad is purchased. Then if anyone would like to purchase additional maps they can do so from the chamber. The chamber will be the primary distributor of the maps.

Where the towns and county governments come in is that it gives you an extra outlet to have access to maps for someone new to the area. At the present time the maps are being sold by the towns and county for \$2.95 each and the money is being turned in to the chamber.

Mr. Allen's understanding is that if the county and, ultimately the three towns, were to purchase advertisement, they can purchase any size ad they would like. But, if they were to purchase, for example, a \$445 ad, which is basically a business card in color, they will get color upgrades at no charge. The chamber will provide the government entity the equivalent (dollar value) of the actual ad value in maps. The entity can then sell them to the local public for what is the price of the map, thereby getting back the cost of the ad. You would ultimately end up over a period of two to three years paying for the ad. The county will receive one free map for every \$20 invested. The chamber receives a percentage of the revenue that the company generates from the selling of the ads – based on a contract between the company and the chamber. Companies that support this publication do so because they feel it is the right thing to do and to support the chamber. The project aids in economic development. The Economic Development Partnership will also be participating in this.

Councilman Hudson made a motion to buy a \$445 ad for the new Edgefield County Chamber of Commerce map. The motion was seconded by Councilman Kitchens. The motion carried with Councilman Dorn opposing.

Heritage Road paving request

Ms. Belinda Cooper reminded council that she attended the November council meeting concerning the request to pave Heritage Drive. At that time she was told the road would be paved before the end of the year and she was in agreement with that. Ms. Cooper said that as of this date nothing has been done. The road at one time was a one lane road and then it was widened. It was a very sandy road and the county put clay on it and that has

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caused the road to be very slippery. She stated this request has been on-going for quite a while.

At the chairman's request, Howard Gibson (Transportation) gave an update on this request. Mr. Gibson asked council members if a signed contract for paving of this road was included in their agenda. Yes was the reply. Mr. Gibson stated that the contractor had told him he would try to begin the paving process before Christmas and he (Gibson) told him no because they would have worked only for a few days. That could have caused the residents to be unable to travel the road should it have rained or whatever. There are four roads under this contract and hopefully the paving will begin with Heritage.

Intergovernmental meeting

The council was in agreement that the intergovernmental meeting be held Monday, January 30, 2006, 6:00 P. M., at the Sertoma Club in Johnston.

Old Business

Traffic Light / Highway 25 and Bettis Academy

Present to discuss the issue of a traffic light at the intersection of Highway 25 and Bettis Academy were Ms. Saundra Curry, Rep. Bill Clyburn, and from the DOT Phillip Brooks and Kevin McLaughlin. Senator Moore was unable to attend and asked Bill Hixon to represent him.

Ms. Curry (resident of the Bettis area) spoke first. She reiterated the accidents she had been a witness to at this particular intersection, and the contacts she has made, to no avail.

Mr. Phillip Brooks (District Administrator, DOT) and Mr. Kevin McLaughlin (Traffic Engineer, DOT District Office) spoke after Ms. Curry. Mr. Brooks stated that they do take their job seriously and certainly regret the accidents that have occurred at the intersection and they are not taken lightly. They have looked at the intersection once again and contacted some staff from the central office and asked them to look at the intersection also. There are a number of changes being recommended for the intersection. Some have already been implemented and others will be done within the next week or two.

Mr. McLaughlin went over the list of items being done. On the Bettis Academy Road approach from I-20, the stop sign was elevated somewhat and moved around so it would be more visible to approaching motorists, as the grade tends to slope down at Hwy 25. Also the series of signs (stop ahead at junction and the stop sign) were in place and the junction sign tended to blend in a little with the other signs. It was moved out of the way,

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back from the “stop head” sign. After you see the “stop ahead” you have real good visibility of the sign.

On Highway 25, when the project was completed for the widening, the double yellow was established for the widening in the turn lanes. Directly before and after that there were some short sections of passing left. Probably this week those will be made double yellow. Then you will have no passing allowed well in advance and beyond the intersection. Also, there will be a nice edged skip line on the right edge on both sides as you travel 25.

Also, the DOT has begun trying something new at some rural intersections similar to this. In standard practice through the years it has always been, as in this case at Bettis/Hwy. 25, to have intersection warning signs (yellow and black) with an advisory speed plate (35 mph in this case). It is a law, enforceable, but typically, it is not enforced other than sometimes in cases of collisions. It has been tried at three or four other locations taking the regulatory speed limit (white and black signs) and bringing that speed limit down to that advisory level. It has been very effective in reducing speed some and, hopefully, eliminating some collisions. We are also going to accomplish that at this intersection where, as you travel north and south on Hwy. 25, you will get a 45 zone – it will be a little short but you will get 45 zoning and you will get a large speeding 35 mph sign before you get to the intersection. Those sign locations were marked today and signs should be in place within the next couple weeks provided we can get the signs, which we should.

Phillip Brooks: “Those are the improvements we are going to make. We cannot currently approve a signal for the location, because it does not meet the national warrants for an intersection of this type. These are the improvements that will be made and we will see if there are any other improvements we can make or if there are any suggestions of other improvements we can make, we would certainly entertain them.”

Councilman Bright asked about the line of sight as you come from Bettis Academy – the white line where you stop (stop limit line). He felt that contributed to the last fatality because the person was driving a small vehicle and she stopped at the line, looked up the road-she could not see anything and pulled out to Highway 25. Mr. Bright asked about taking the bank down some (northeast side toward Trenton). Kevin stated that it is better if you roll up past the line which is not against the law. That is why we have the dash edge line to let motorists know where the stopping point is and the beginning of the intersection. Mr. Brooks said they would look into that at the intersection, and if it is possible, SC DOT will shift forward the current stop line. We will look at the bank to see if it is an issue and if something needs to be graded that is within our right-of-way that we can do we will certainly take that route.

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The chairman said he had been down to check things out. He wanted to know what the possibility would be of getting a flashing caution sign where the stop signs are and after you would get the flashing caution then just beyond there put a couple of ripple strips so when you run over them it would alert people they are approaching a stop sign. In response to this, Mr. Brooks said the only reason DOT does not recommend the strips is because of the residences in the area. The strips are quite noisy, and there have had many complaints in other areas where the strips were used. Mr. Brooks stated that Mr. Adams indicated that the county and CTC would be willing to put those in under permit. Even though DOT does not believe they fit the situation they will, under permit, allow this to be done. He will be glad to sign an encroachment permit allowing the strips. Mr. Kneece asked if DOT would be willing to pay power bill for the flashing caution light. Mr. Brooks' reply was that the caution light was a little different. A caution light is something that is not warranted for that location and is something he would have to talk with the central office about, which he will do.

The speed limit at the church will be reduced, per Mr. McLaughlin.

Mobile concession trailer bid

Motion was made by Councilman Bright to accept the bid of \$47,404 submitted by Custom Concessions of Virginia. Councilman Hudson seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

Upper Savannah COG

Rick Green, Upper Savannah COG, reminded council that CDBG applications will be coming up in the very near future. Water & Sewer line applications will be due around March / April. If council has a project coming up, please notify him as soon as possible.

Plane Fun

Linda Anderson stated that at the last meeting Plane Fun had requested some funding to assist with the running and maintenance of the EC Airport. She asked about the status of the request. The chairman informed Ms. Anderson the request would be on the February agenda.

No executive session.

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Claims approved as follows:

A. PAYROLL: 11/21/05 thru 12/4/05
Regular.....\$197,937.00
PAYROLL: 12/5/05 thru 12/18/05
Regular.....\$188,763.89
PAYROLL: 12/19/05 thru 1/1/06
Regular.....\$200,833.54
B. GENERAL OPERATING..... \$613,511.68

There being no further business, Councilman Dorn made the motion to adjourn, seconded by Councilman Hudson. The next regular meeting of council will be held Tuesday, February 7, 2006.

C. Monroe Kneece, Chairman

Willie C. Bright, Vice Chairman

Norman Dorn, Councilman

Joel D. Hudson, Councilman

B. Everette Kitchens, Council

ATTEST

Barbara R. Stark, Clerk to Council

